UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

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A/RES/49/178
2 March 1995

Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 100 (a)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/49/610/Add.1)]

49/178. Effective implementation of international instruments on human rights, including reporting obligations under international instruments on human rights

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 48/120 of 20 December 1993, as well as other relevant resolutions,

Reaffirming that the effective implementation of United Nations human rights instruments is of major importance to the efforts of the Organization, pursuant to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Conscious of the importance of coordination of human rights promotion and protection activities of United Nations bodies whose activities deal with human rights,

Reaffirming its responsibility to ensure the proper functioning of treaty bodies established pursuant to instruments adopted by the General Assembly and, in this connection, reaffirming the importance of:

(a) Ensuring the effective functioning of systems of periodic reporting by States parties to these instruments;

(b) Securing sufficient financial and human resources to overcome existing difficulties with their effective functioning;

(c) Addressing questions of both reporting obligations and financial implications whenever elaborating any further instruments on human rights,

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1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

Taking note of the conclusions and recommendations of the fifth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, held at Geneva from 19 to 23 September 1994, 2/

Noting with appreciation the initiatives taken by a number of treaty bodies to elaborate early warning measures and urgent procedures with a view to preventing the occurrence, or recurrence, of serious human rights violations,

Expressing concern about the increasing backlog of reports on implementation by States parties to United Nations instruments on human rights and about delays in the consideration of reports by the treaty bodies,

Expressing concern also about the non-fulfilment by many States parties of their financial obligations under the relevant United Nations instruments on human rights,

Recalling the reports of the meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies from 1988 to 1993 and the endorsement of the recommendations aimed at streamlining, rationalizing and otherwise improving reporting procedures by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/120,

Taking note of the relevant paragraphs of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, 3/

Taking note also of the reports of the Secretary-General 4/ on progress achieved in enhancing the effective functioning of the treaty bodies, and of the note by the Secretary-General 5/

Welcoming the contribution to the work of the human rights treaty bodies made by the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies,

1. Welcomes the submission of the report of the fifth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies, and takes note of the conclusions and recommendations in the report; 2/

2. Welcomes also the continuing efforts by the treaty bodies and the Secretary-General, within their respective spheres of competence, aimed at streamlining, rationalizing and otherwise improving reporting procedures;

3. Again urges States parties to make every effort to meet their reporting obligations and to contribute, individually and through meetings of States parties, to identifying and implementing ways of further streamlining and improving reporting procedures;

4. Urges the treaty bodies to examine ways of reducing the duplication of reporting required under the different instruments and of generally reducing the reporting burden on Member States, including through:

2/ A/49/537, annex, sect. IV.

3/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

4/ A/44/539, A/46/503 and A/48/508 and Corr.1.

5/ A/49/537.

(a) Identifying where cross-referencing can be used in report writing;

(b) Recommending, where appropriate, the designation of specific national administrative units to coordinate reports to all treaty bodies;

(c) Establishing coordination between the treaty bodies and the International Labour Organization to identify overlap between respective instruments and conventions;

(d) Considering the utility of single comprehensive reports and of replacing periodic reports with specifically tailored reports and thematic reports;

5. Welcomes the emphasis placed by the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies and by the Commission on Human Rights on the importance of technical assistance and advisory services and, further to this end:

(a) Requests that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report regularly to the Commission on possible technical assistance projects identified by the treaty bodies;

(b) Invites the treaty bodies to give priority attention to identifying such possibilities in the regular course of their work of reviewing the periodic reports of States parties;

(c) Invites States parties that have been unable to comply with the requirements to submit their initial report to avail themselves of technical assistance;

6. Urges States parties to address, as a matter of priority, at their next scheduled meetings, the issue of States parties consistently not complying with their reporting obligations;

7. Urges all States parties whose reports have been examined by treaty bodies to provide adequate follow-up to the observations and final comments of the treaty bodies on their reports;

8. Invites the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies and the human rights treaty bodies to develop effective means for further cooperation between them, bearing in mind the responsibilities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;

9. Invites the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to consult the human rights treaty bodies in relation to his efforts to promote cooperation with regional intergovernmental organizations for the promotion and protection of human rights;

10. Welcomes the emphasis by the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on the need for the enjoyment of the human rights of women to be closely monitored by each treaty body within the competence of its mandate, and endorses the recommendation by the chairpersons that each treaty body consider amending its reporting guidelines to request gender-specific information from States parties;

11. Recognizes the important role played by non-governmental organizations in the effective implementation of all human rights instruments;

12. Endorses the recommendations of the meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies on the need to ensure financing and adequate

staffing resources for the operations of the treaty bodies and, with this in mind:

(a) Reiterates its request that the Secretary-General provide adequate resources in relation to the various treaty bodies;

(b) Requests that the Secretary-General report on this question to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session and to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session;

13. Urges States parties to notify the Secretary-General, as depository of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 6/ and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 7/ of their acceptance of the amendments approved by the States parties, and by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/120;

14. Calls upon all States parties to fulfil without delay and in full their financial obligations, including their arrears, under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment until the amendments enter into force;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to ensure that the two committees established under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment meet as scheduled until the amendments enter into force;

16. Takes note of the recommendation by the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women should be allocated additional meeting time until the backlog of pending reports has been eliminated, and that the Secretary-General should allocate sufficient resources from the existing regular budget of the United Nations to the Committee; 8/

17. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, acting within his mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, to ensure the preparation of an inventory of all international human rights standard-setting activities from within existing resources, in order to facilitate better-informed decision-making;

18. Welcomes the recommendation by the meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies 9/ that treaty bodies should urge the States parties to translate, publish and make available to the media the full text of the concluding observations on their reports to the treaty-monitoring bodies, and requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that recent reports and the summary records of committee discussions pertaining to them, as well as concluding observations and final comments of

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6/ Resolution 2106 A (XX), annex.

7/ Resolution 39/46, annex.

8/ See A/49/537, annex, paras. 49-51.

9/ Ibid., para. 44.

the treaty bodies, are made available in the United Nations information centres in the countries submitting those reports;

19. Invites the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat to publish at the end of each year, from within existing resources, as a separate volume, a compilation of all concluding observations adopted during that year by treaty bodies;

20. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure, from within existing resources, that the United Nations Manual on Human Rights Reporting is available in all official languages at the earliest opportunity and that due regard is paid to the recommendations concerning the Manual made by the fifth meeting of the persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies; 10/

21. Welcomes all appropriate measures the human rights treaty bodies may take, within their mandates, in response to situations of massive human rights violations, including bringing those violations to the attention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as the Secretary-General and the competent bodies of the United Nations in the field of human rights, and requests the High Commissioner, acting within his mandate, to coordinate and consult throughout the United Nations system in this regard;

22. Requests the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps in order to finance, as of 1995, annual meetings of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies from the available resources of the regular budget of the United Nations;

23. Decides to continue giving priority consideration, at its fiftieth session, to the conclusions and recommendations of the meetings of persons chairing human rights treaty bodies, in the light of the deliberations of the Commission on Human Rights, under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

94th plenary meeting
23 December 1994

10/ Ibid., para. 57.

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Agenda item 100 (b)

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/49/610/Add.2)]

49/179. Human rights and extreme poverty

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 2/ the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2/ and other human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations,

Considering the relevant provisions of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, 3/

Recalling its resolutions 44/148 of 15 December 1989, 44/212 of 22 December 1989 and 45/199 of 21 December 1990, and other relevant resolutions,

Bearing in mind Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1992/11 of 21 February 1992 4/ and 1993/13 of 26 February 1993, 5/ as well as

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1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 2 (E/1992/22), chap. II, sect. A.

5/ Ibid., 1993, Supplement No. 3 (E/1993/23), chap. II, sect. A.

1993/35 of 25 August 1993 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 6/

Bearing in mind also Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/12 of 25 February 1994, 7/ in which the Commission drew the attention of the General Assembly to the contradiction between the existence of situations of extreme poverty and social exclusion, which must be overcome, and the duty to guarantee the full enjoyment of human rights,

Recalling its resolution 47/134 of 18 December 1992, in which it reaffirmed that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constituted a violation of human dignity and stressed the need for a complete and in-depth study of extreme poverty, based on the experience and the thoughts of the poorest,

Recognizing that the existence of widespread extreme poverty inhibits the full and effective enjoyment of human rights and, in some situations, might constitute a threat to the right to life,

Deeply concerned that extreme poverty continues to spread in all countries of the world, regardless of their economic, social and cultural situation, and seriously affects the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and groups, who are thus hindered in the exercise of their human rights and their fundamental freedoms,

Recognizing that the elimination of widespread poverty and the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights are interrelated goals,

Recognizing also the work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur, and taking into account his preliminary report on human rights and extreme poverty, 8/

Affirming the importance of the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, to be held at Copenhagen in March 1995, which will address, among the core issues affecting all societies, the alleviation and reduction of poverty,

1. Reaffirms that extreme poverty and exclusion from society constitute a violation of human dignity and that urgent national and international action is therefore required to eliminate them;

2. Reaffirms also that, in accordance with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, it is essential for States to foster participation by the poorest people in the decision-making process in their communities, in the promotion of human rights and in efforts to combat extreme poverty;

3. Expresses its satisfaction that the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1994/12, invited the Special Rapporteur to continue to give special attention to the following aspects in preparing his reports:

6/ See E/CN.4/1994/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/45 and Corr.1, chap. II, sect. A.

7/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 and corrigendum (E/1994/24 and Corr.1), chap. II, sect. A.

8/ E/CN.4/Sub.2/1993/16.

(a) The effects of extreme poverty on the enjoyment and exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of those affected by it;

(b) Efforts by the poorest themselves to exercise their rights and participate fully in the development of the society in which they live;

(c) Conditions in which the poorest can convey their experiences and ideas and become partners in the enjoyment of human rights;

(d) Means of promoting a better understanding of the experiences and ideas of the poorest and those committed to working alongside them;

4. Again calls upon States, the specialized agencies, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, including intergovernmental organizations, to give the necessary attention to this problem;

5. Notes with appreciation the specific actions taken by the United Nations Children's Fund to mitigate the effects of extreme poverty on children and the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to give priority to the search for some means of alleviating poverty within the framework of the relevant resolutions, and urges them to continue in this work;

6. Decides to consider this question further at its fifty-first session under the sub-item entitled "Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".

94th plenary meeting
23 December 1994